The Adventures of
Captain Jack
PUT AWAY YOUR GUNS, BOYS! THERE ARE OTHER, MORE POWERFUL WAYS TO DEAL WITH CREATURES LIKE THESE. ONE MUST TRY TO REASON WITH THEM... TO APPEAL TO THEIR FINER INSTINCTS...
DID YOU BRING THE BEADS AND TRINKETS....?
$2.00 U.S.
$2.75 CAN.
No. 1
FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

Wally Wood replied to my gushing fan letter with a half-page typed note. "Don't become a cartoonist. Become a plumber or an electrician. Cartoonists have nothing to look forward to but social security in their old age." What did I know? It was 1979 and I was a senior in high school. I thought he was kidding.

I took the sacred document, my Wally Wood letter, to school to show Mike Kazaleh. I lost it on the way home. On another occasion, I showed Mike his first Underground Comix, **Mr. Natural** #1. You see, I discovered Mike Kazaleh.

No, no, just kidding. Until then, Mike had lived and breathed animation, watching everything possible on Saturday mornings as a youngster, and later reviewing with a more critical eye as a teenager fixing TVs in his pop's repair ship in the afternoon. His idols were Bob Clampett, Chuck Jones, Bob Clampett, Tex Avery, and Bob Clampett, as I recall. Of course, Mike had drawn for as long as he could remember.

I was strictly a comic book man. I had gorged myself on Marvels from 1972-1977 (there were still plenty of Kirbys and Sterankos to acquire through trades from the kid on the next block), when suddenly an unexpected thing happened: I outgrew them (or maybe they turned shitty; I give the benefit of the doubt). So I began exploring Underground Comix, as soon as I was old enough to buy them, as well as Moebius and the **Metal Hurlant** school, Eisner's **Spirit**, back, back, to EC and beyond to the looming past, for inspiration and example.

As the Eighties rolled around, Mike and I had a strange influence on each other. I suppose when it comes right down to it, and if the truth were told, Mike and I couldn't stand each other's guts for more than short spaces of time. I guess it was the sense of "cul de sac," the sneaking feeling that all the good stuff had happened in the past and certainly wasn't happening now, that somehow bonded us together. The theatrical cartoon short, for all practical purposes, no longer existed; the Undergrounds were drying up; **Mad** had been under the pedestrian Al Feldstein for centuries it seemed; and Stan Lee had long ago put his creative children up for adoption to foster parents.

There wasn't much cause for hope in those days. The **Heavy Metal** movie was unwatchable, **The Fox and the Hound** not much better, and Ralph Bakshi the undisputed genius of the swamplands that animation had become. Even Chuck Jones's new "Duck Dodgers" for George Lucas was a disaster. This was the field that Mike so desperately wanted to be a part of.

Prospects didn't look too much better for me. The trips to the comic shop that I would con Mike into (he had the Chevette) were fruitless to say the least. The new alternatives from Pacific (formula: 3 pages Dave Stevens—29 pages crap) and Eclipse (who would perfect this formula to: Dave Stevens Cover—32 pages crap) were—ahem—disappointing. I would literally stand in front of the huge Marvel/DC rack for half an hour sometimes, like a couch potato staring at a test pattern long after Prime Time had gone off the air, scanning the titles for something, **anything** worthwhile enough to read, to enjoy, to learn from...any sign of creative life! Nothing. Mike, who had purchased a couple of **Herbies** or **Help!s** a couple of hours ago, and had patiently stood there, watching me do this to myself, would finally take my hand and gently lead me next door to Wendy's. It was all over but the crying.

[Continued on inside back cover]

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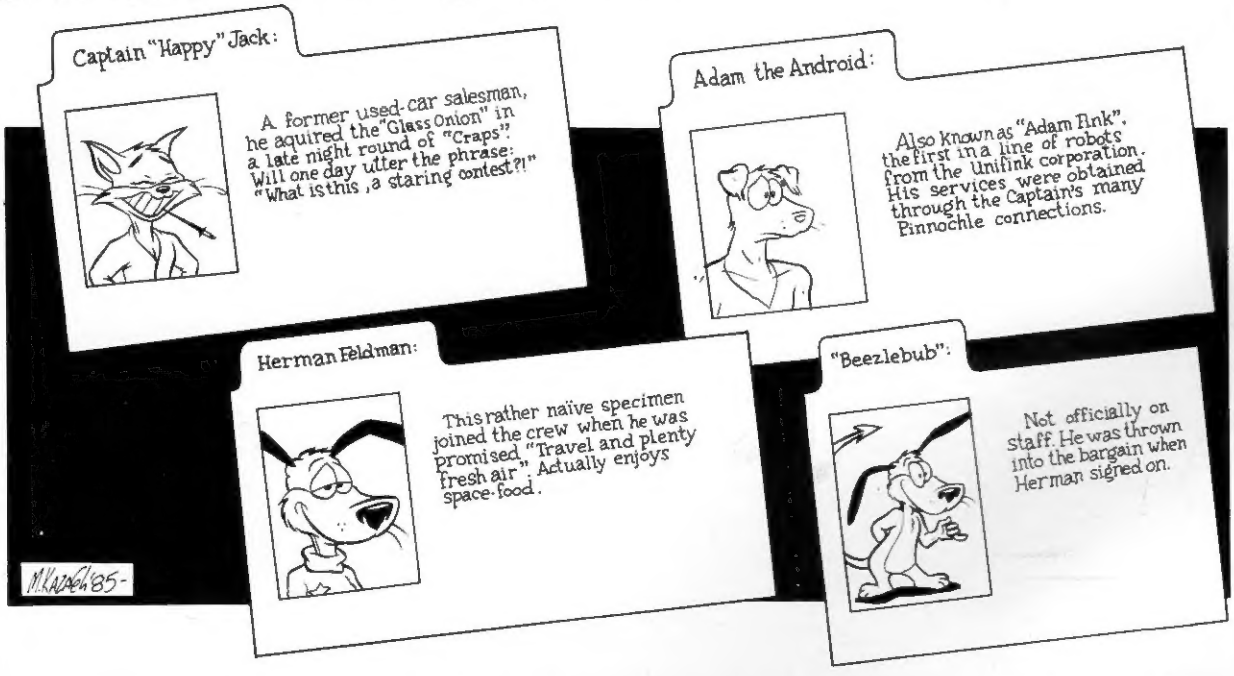
MEET THE CREW!



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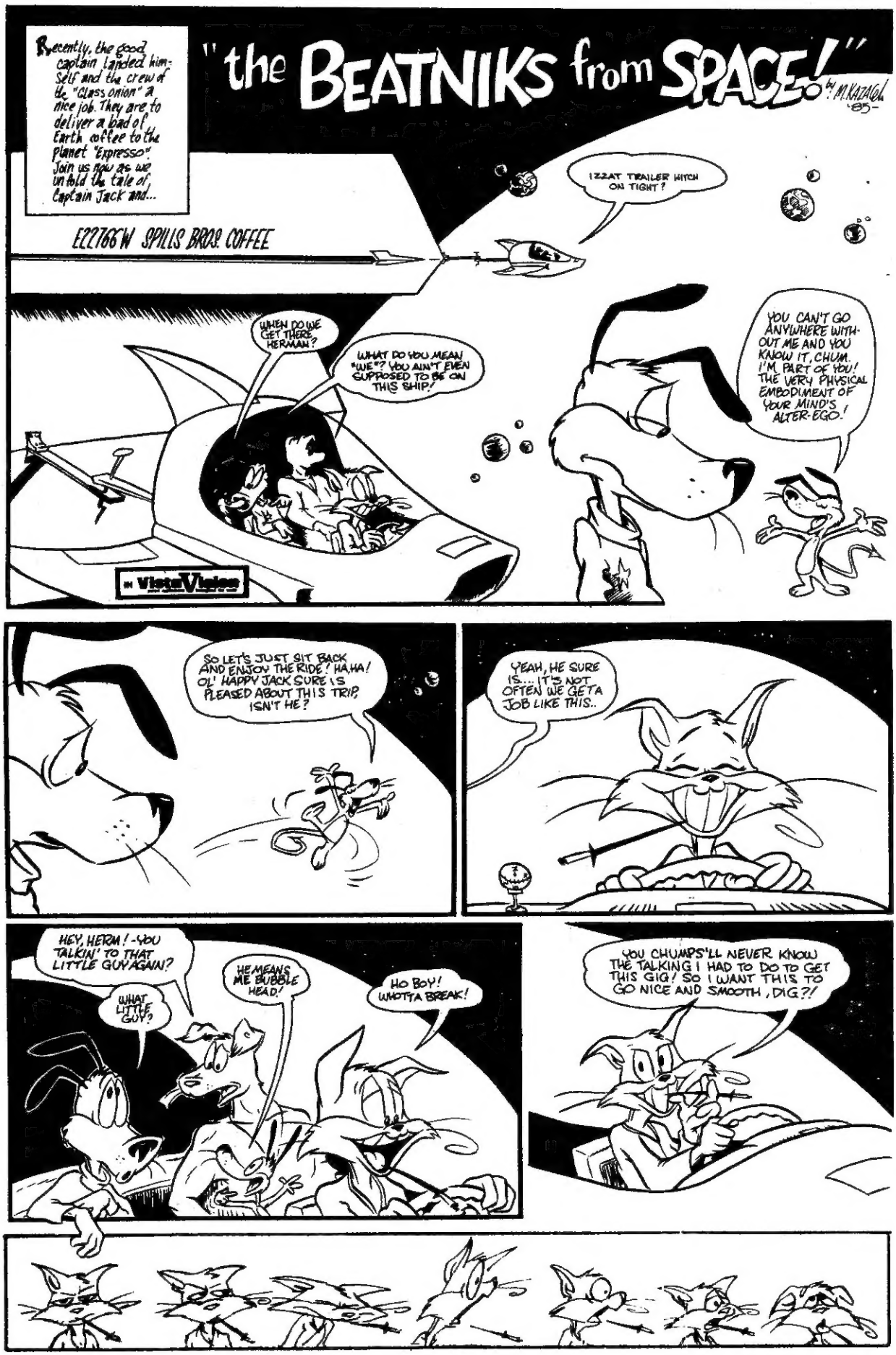

"the BEATNIKS from SPACE!"
by M.KAZAEh '85
Recently, the good captain landed himself and the crew of the "Glass onion" a nice job. They are to deliver a load of Earth coffee to the planet "Expresso". Join us now as we unfold the tale of Captain Jack and...
E22766W SPILLS BROS. COFFEE
IZZAT TRAILER HITCH ON TIGHT?
WHEN DO WE GET THERE HERMAN?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN "WE"? YOU AIN'T EVEN SUPPOSED TO BE ON THIS SHIP!
YOU CAN'T GO ANYWHERE WITHOUT ME AND YOU KNOW IT, CHUM. I'M PART OF YOU! THE VERY PHYSICAL EMBODIMENT OF YOUR MIND'S ALTER-EGO!
in VistaVision
SO LET'S JUST SIT BACK AND ENJOY THE RIDE! HA,HA! OL' HAPPY JACK SURE IS PLEASED ABOUT THIS TRIP, ISN'T HE?
YEAH, HE SURE IS... IT'S NOT OFTEN WE GET A JOB LIKE THIS..
HEY, HERM! - YOU TALKIN' TO THAT LITTLE GUY AGAIN?
WHAT LITTLE GUY?
HE MEANS ME BUBBLE HEAD!
HO BOY! WHOTTA BREAK!
YOU CHUMPS'LL NEVER KNOW THE TALKING I HAD TO DO TO GET THIS GIG! SO I WANT THIS TO GO NICE AND SMOOTH, DIG?!

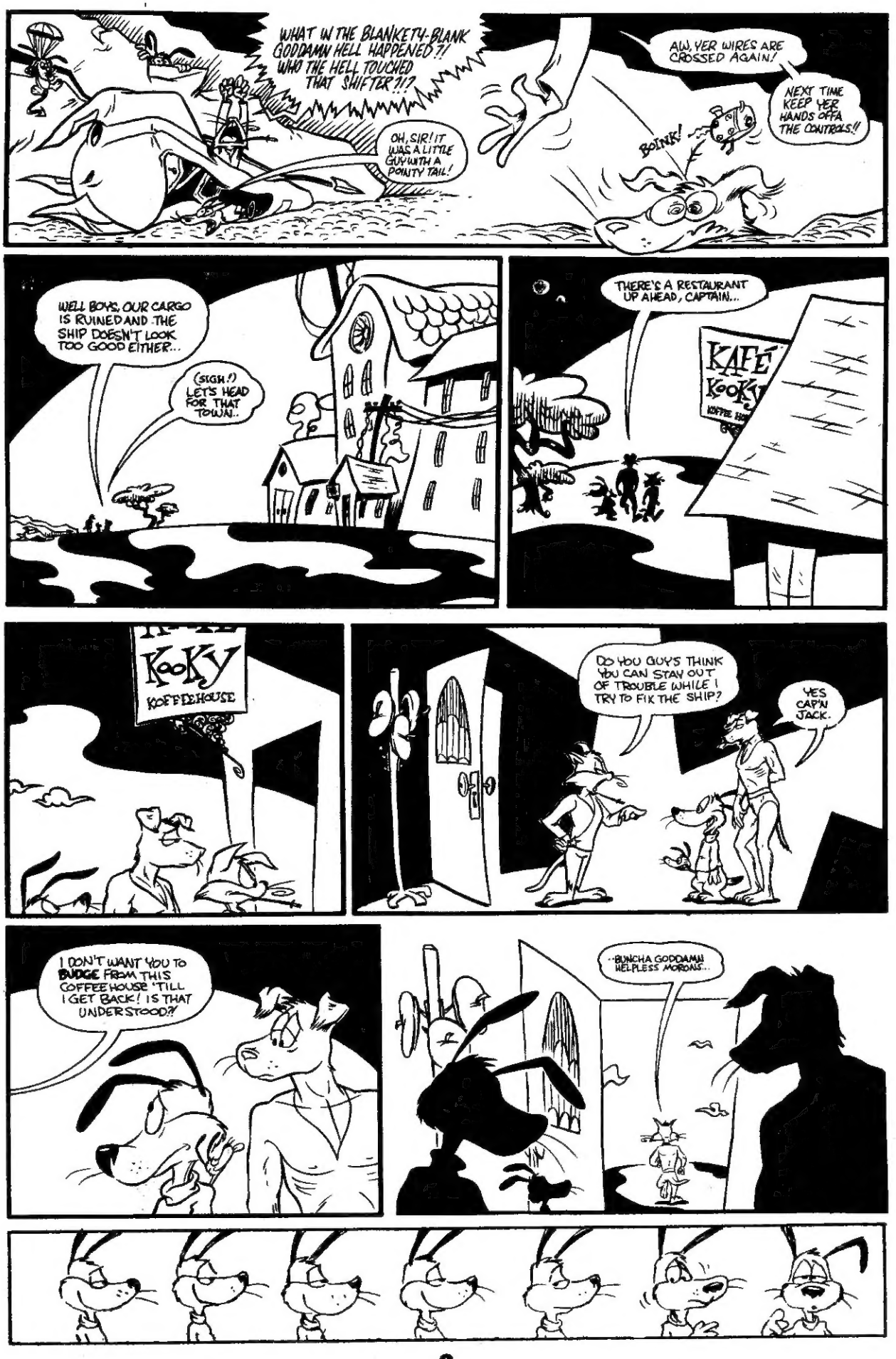
WE'RE IN THE PLANET'S ORBIT NOW...
FUEL
AMPS
..WE'RE JUST GOING TO DUMP OUR LOAD, PICK UP THE CASH, AND SPLIT!
PERIOD!

-Beezlebub chooses not to be seen most of the time. He possesses the power to cloud men's minds. This power does not, however, affect Adam's electronic brain~~
HEY, HERM... JUST WHAT THE HECK IS GOING ON, ANYWAY?!

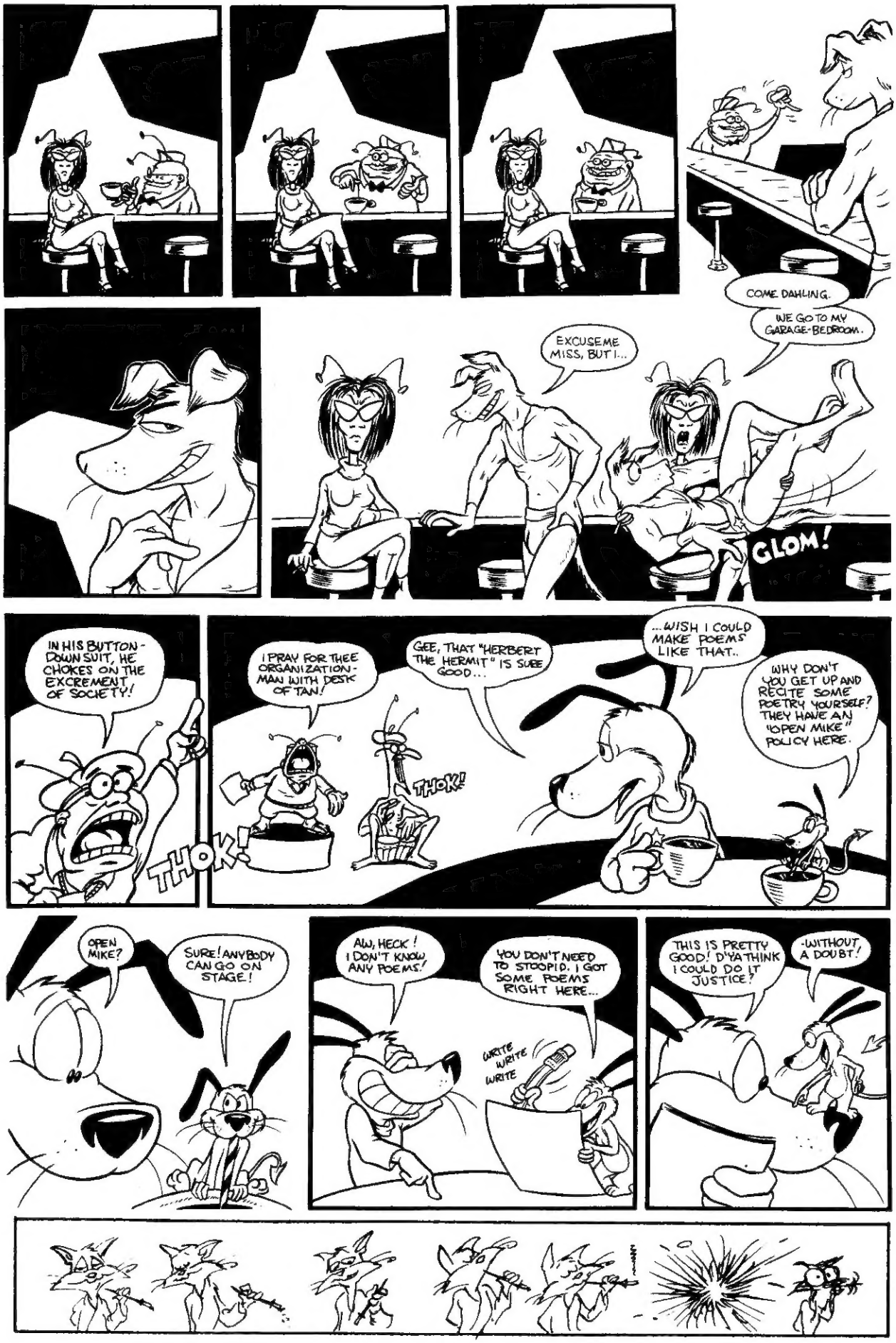
CLACK!
CAPTAIN!!

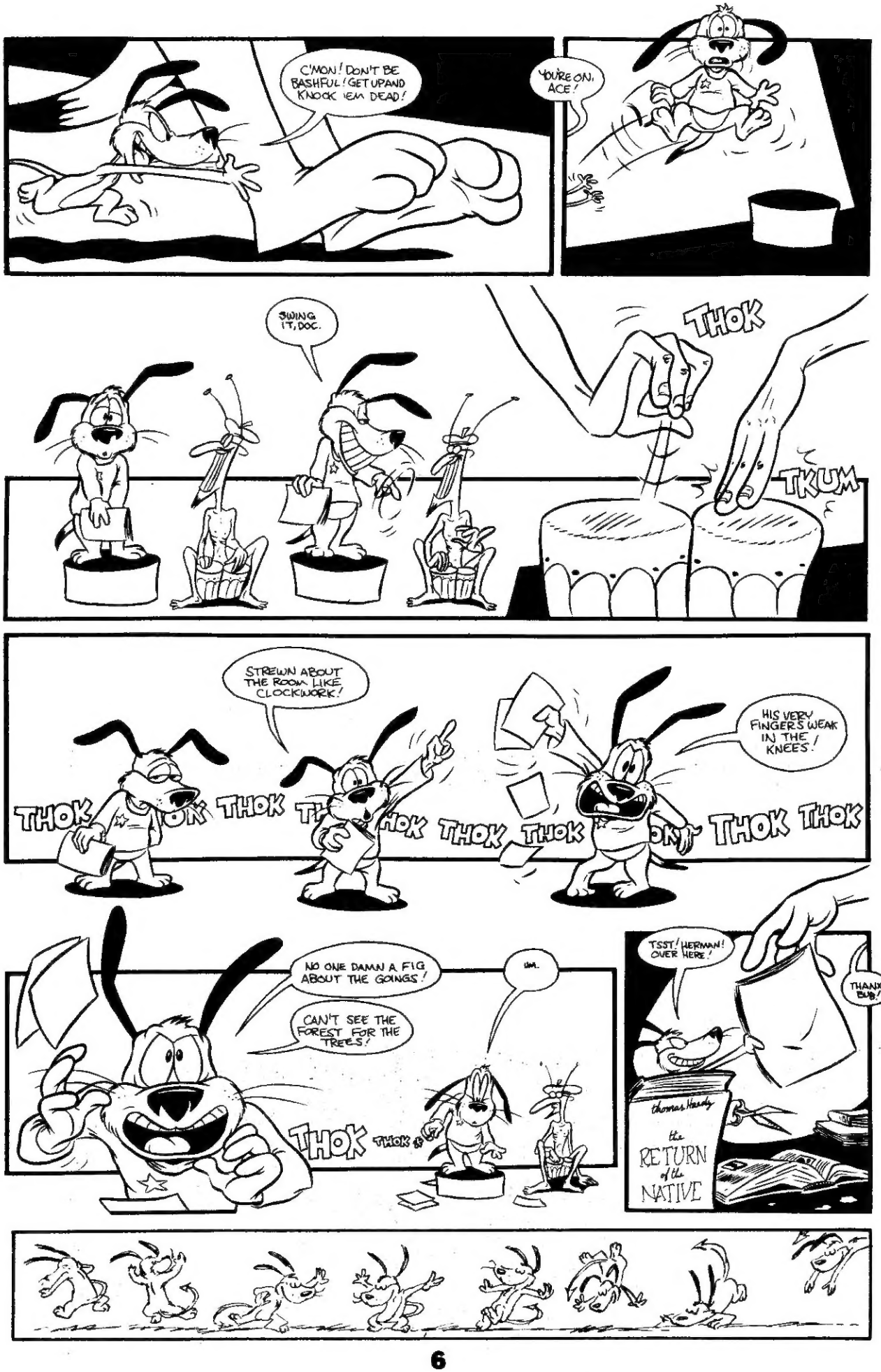
DIVE!
TOO LATE! The Glass Onion had already been thrown into nuetral!
-And what happens when you take a ship carrying a heavy trailer out of gear at 63,000,000 mph?!
FWEEEEEEE

WHEEEEEE
BOOM

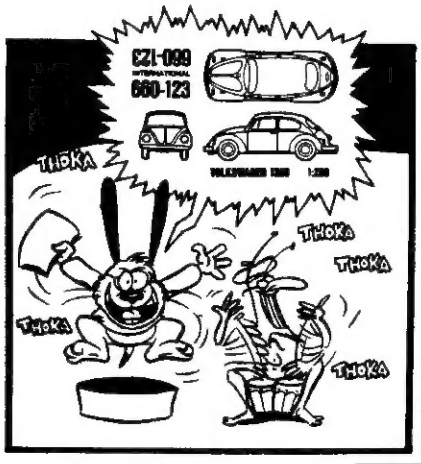

WHAT IN THE BLANKETY-BLANK GODDAMN HELL HAPPENED?! WHO THE HELL TOUCHED THAT SHIFTER?!?
OH, SIR! IT WAS A LITTLE GUY WITH A POINTY TAIL!
AW, YER WIRES ARE CROSSED AGAIN!
NEXT TIME KEEP YER HANDS OFFA THE CONTROLS!!
BOINK!
WELL BOYS, OUR CARGO IS RUINED AND THE SHIP DOESN'T LOOK TOO GOOD EITHER...
(SIGH!) LET'S HEAD FOR THAT TOWN..
THERE'S A RESTAURANT UP AHEAD, CAPTAIN...
KAFÉ KOOKY
KOOKY KOFFEEHOUSE
DO YOU GUYS THINK YOU CAN STAY OUT OF TROUBLE WHILE I TRY TO FIX THE SHIP?
YES CAP'N JACK.
I DON'T WANT YOU TO BUDGE FROM THIS COFFEEHOUSE 'TILL I GET BACK! IS THAT UNDERSTOOD?!
..BUNCHA GODDAMN HELPLESS MORONS...

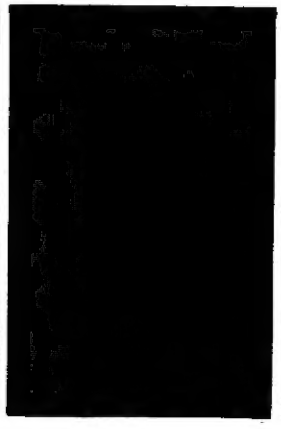
FSSSHHHHHHHHH
10-WHO WEIGHT MOTOR OIL
VALVO
THANKS CHARLIE.
NO PROBLEM.
!
BUT SOFT! 'TIS A VISION OF LOVELINESS WHICH CROSSES MY PATH THIS DAY! GIVES ME WEARY OL' CIRCUITS A CHARGE! TELL ME CHARLIE... WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS FLOWER?
WELL SPORT, I UNDERSTAND SHE'S VERY GOOD IN BED.
HIYA SISTER. WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO DRINK IN THIS JOINT?
WE HAVE EXPRESSO, CAPUCCINO, CAFÉ MINUTO, MOCHA JAVA, JAVA JAVA AND CARRIBEAN CRUNCH.
JEEPERS CREEPERS! I WUZ KINDA HOPING I COULD GET A CUP OF COFFEE...
THIS IS REALLY A CLASSY DUMP, YOU KNOW THAT? I HEAR THERE'S GONNA BE A POETRY READING TONIGHT...
GOT ANYTHING BY OGDEN NASH?
LOOK, CHARLIE. DO ME A FAVOUR WILL YA?
LISTEN...

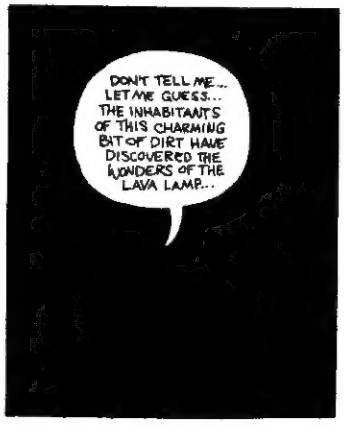

COME DAHLING.
WE GO TO MY GARAGE-BEDROOM.
EXCUSE ME MISS, BUT I...
GLOM!
IN HIS BUTTON-DOWN SUIT, HE CHOKES ON THE EXCREMENT OF SOCIETY!
THOK!
I PRAY FOR THEE ORGANIZATION-MAN WITH DESK OF TAN!
THOK!
GEE, THAT "HERBERT THE HERMIT" IS SUBE GOOD...
...WISH I COULD MAKE POEMS LIKE THAT..
WHY DON'T YOU GET UP AND RECITE SOME POETRY YOURSELF? THEY HAVE AN "OPEN MIKE" POLICY HERE.
OPEN MIKE?
SURE! ANYBODY CAN GO ON STAGE!
AW, HECK! I DON'T KNOW ANY POEMS!
YOU DON'T NEED TO STOOPID. I GOT SOME POEMS RIGHT HERE...
WRITE WRITE WRITE
THIS IS PRETTY GOOD! D'YA THINK I COULD DO IT JUSTICE?
-WITHOUT A DOUBT!


C'MON! DON'T BE BASHFUL! GET UP AND KNOCK 'EM DEAD!
YOU'RE ON, ACE!
SWING IT, DOC.
THOK
TKUM
STREWN ABOUT THE ROOM LIKE CLOCKWORK!
HIS VERY FINGERS WEAK IN THE KNEES!
THOK THOK THOK THOK THOK THOK THOK THOK
NO ONE DAMN A FIG ABOUT THE GOINGS!
CAN'T SEE THE FOREST FOR THE TREES!
UM.
THOK THOK
TSST! HERMAN! OVER HERE!
THANX BUB!
Thomas Hardy
the RETURN of the NATIVE

AHEM.
"Saturday afternoon in November was approaching the time of twilight moment by moment...."
"Billy went from total dark to total light, and found himself back in the war again..."
HEY! THAT'S GROOVY! A TROOLY PROFOUND STATEMENT OF THE WAR SITUATION....
SHHHHH! NOW WHAT'S HE SAYING?
OVERCOMI
WHY DIET WHE
FOR FAST W
DETROIT BALL BEARING COMPANY
DARLING, THAT WAS JUST WUNDERBAR! I HAVE NO IDEA SUCH LOVE IT COULD MAKE FROM A ANDROID!
CHE LIVES!
I THINK I ARE IN LOVE!
HEY! IZZATA "LAVA LAMP"?
*YES! ONE OF THOSE LAMPS WITH THE COLOURED GOOP INSIDE FLOATING ABOUT. POPULAR ON EARTH IN THE LATE SIXTIES...
OH, BAY-BEE! IF YOU THINK THAT WAS GOOD, WAIT'LL YOU SEE THE LITTLE TRICK I DO WITH THE LAVA LAMP!
THE OUTLETS AROUND HERE ARE 110 VOLTS AREN'T THEY?
-FINALLY GOT THE BLASTED SHIP BACK IN ONE PIECE! IT'S TIME WE GOT THE HELL OFFOF...
CLAP CLAP CLAP
KATE KOOKY
STOMP
WHISTLE!
WOO!
BRAVO!
WHOOP WHOOP!



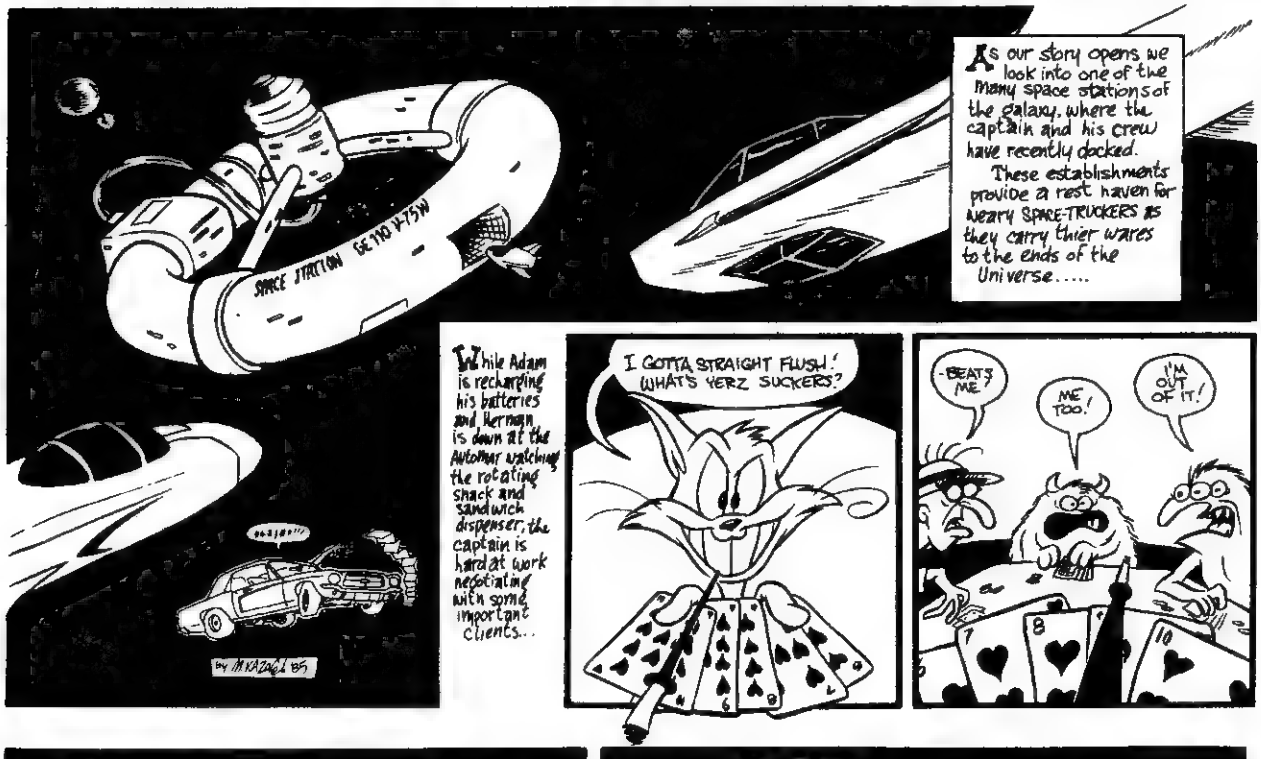




THIS STORY IS DEDICATED TO THE LATE BOB CLAMPETT.

...There are many theories about what happens to the waves from our radio and television broadcasts. Some say nothing at all. However, there are those who believe that they have simply drifted out into space, only to be recieved hundreds of years later by the...

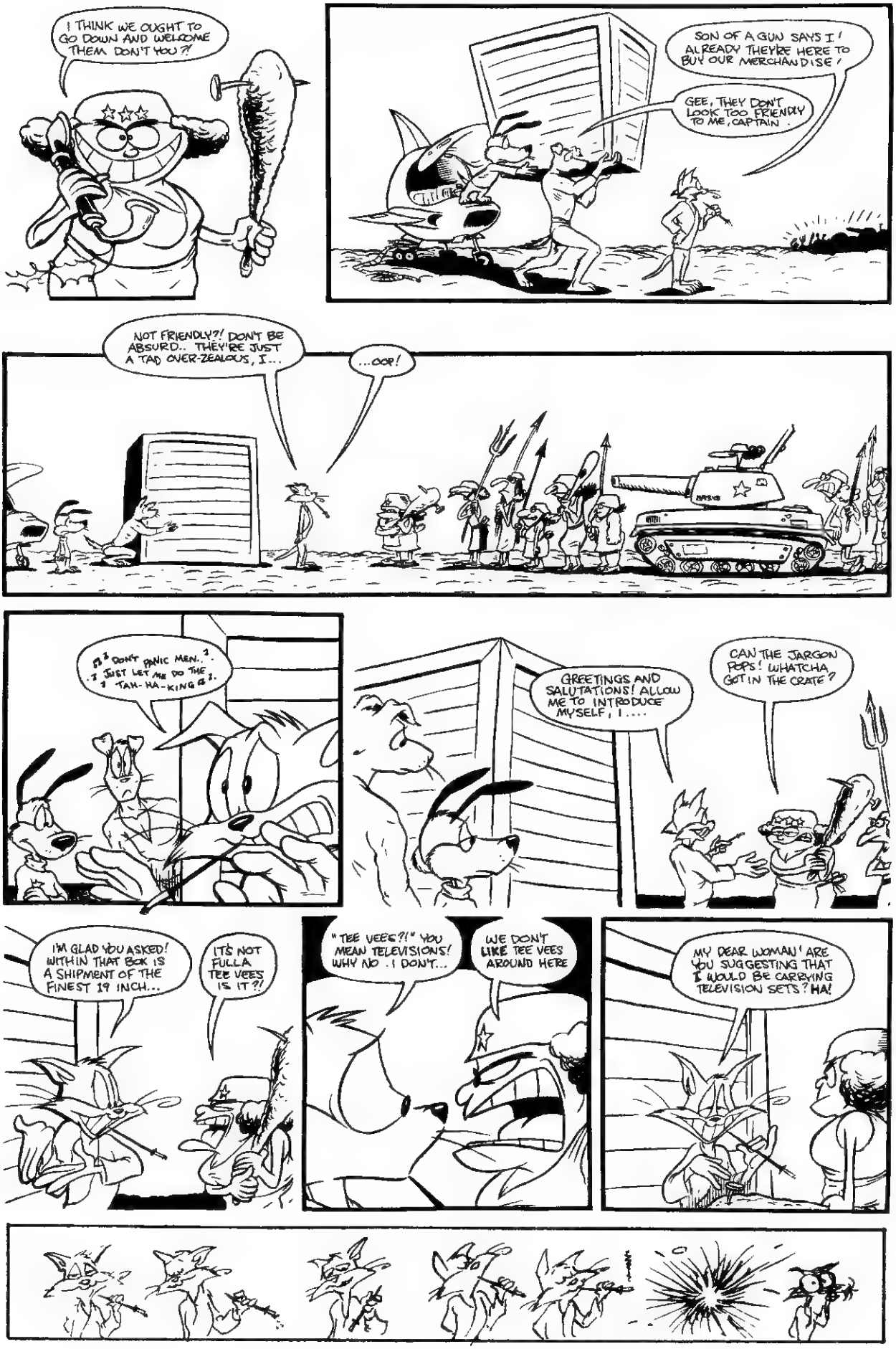
"PLANET of the BOOB-TUBE WIDOWS!"



WE-ELL...
LOOKIE! HERE'S THE INVOICE! I'LL TELL THE BOSS THAT HE FORGOT TO PUT 'EM ON THE SHIP!
"'EM"?! 'EM WHAT?!
WAIT A MINUTE! THIS BILL IS FOR... FOR...
FOR..
2000 TELEVISION SETS?!
YEP! I GOT THE PINK SLIP DADDY!
SO WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THEM?
RCS
XL-1000:00
RADIO CORPORATION of SPACE
I DON'T KNOW YET ADAM, BUT JUST THE SAME, GET THAT CRATE TIED TO THE SHIP!
HEY, HERM! DIDJA EVER HEAR OF THE PLANET "SIARTI"?
"SIARTI"?!
2000 WEIGHTY UNITS
SHO' NUFF?!
IT'S IN THE GALAXY OF "RASTAR" AND THEY ARE ABOSOLUTELY MAD FOR TEE VEE!
CAPTAIN! CAPTAIN!
OH, CAPTAIN! DID YOU EVER HEAR OF THE PLANET "SIARTI"?!
NO, WHAT OF IT..?
Meanwhile.... in another part of the Universe....
-MORNIN' LUV
'LO HEN

So what's new with you, dearrie?
-Same old thing! The crater's going all to hell! -Seems all George'll do anymore is watch re-runs of earth situation comedies..
Yeah, I know! It's the same story with Henry! He just sits on his arse all day! We've not got a crumb to eat in the place.
Y'know, we've done nothing with our evenings but watch "Pettycoat Junction"!
Oh, by the way, my George said he was going over to your place to watch "Gilligan's Island" with Hank.....
-did he now..
Hey, Hank! Is "Gilligan's Island" on yet?
Uh, no - still gotta few more minutes left of "The Flying Nun"
$5000?!? Are you out of your mind, Siester?!
Hey! That's Gioget!
Uh, huh....
But Carlos, please! I promised Mother Superior that I'd come up with a slot machine for "Casino Night"!
Gee!
No, no! Not one more centavo will you get from me!
Who'd ever thought Shed become a nun?!
Uh, huh...
Bawwwh!!!
Ok, ok! Here's de cheque! Just get out!
Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha
Laugh Track
Henry! I think it's time you and I had a little talk...
Uh, huh..

IT'S BEEN MONTH'S SINCE YOUVE GONE FORAGING FOR FOOD! THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO EAT!
HENRY! DID YOU HEAR WHAT I SAID?! WEVE NO MORE FOOD! PFFFT! IT'S GONE! HENRY?!
HENRY!!
SAY, WOOJA RUN INTA THE KITCHEN AN' FIX US A COUPLA SAN'WITCHES HONEYPOT?
fume fume
WHACK!
I CAN'T STAND IT ANY LONGER! THE TIME IS AT HAND TO CAST OFF THE SHACKLES OF OUR ELECTRONIC OPPRESSORS!
RIGHT ON!
SISTERS OF THE PLANET UNITE!
POW!
THIS MEANS ALL OUT WAR!
HUZZAH!!
THERE SHE IS FELLAS! THE PLANET SHARD!
COMES NOW THE PAYOFF!
GOLLY SARGE! AN ALIEN CRAFT IS HEADIN' FER US!
O.P.
OUR SPOTTER REPORTS THE CRAFT IS LANDING DOWN IN SECTOR FIVE!


I THINK WE OUGHT TO GO DOWN AND WELCOME THEM DON'T YOU?!
SON OF A GUN SAYS I! ALREADY THEY'RE HERE TO BUY OUR MERCHANDISE!
GEE, THEY DON'T LOOK TOO FRIENDLY TO ME, CAPTAIN.
NOT FRIENDLY?! DON'T BE ABSURD.. THEY'RE JUST A TAD OVER-ZEALOUS, I...
...OOP!
DON'T PANIC MEN. JUST LET ME DO THE TAH-HA-KING.
GREETINGS AND SALUTATIONS! ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF, I....
CAN THE JARGON POPS! WHATCHA GOT IN THE CRATE?
I'M GLAD YOU ASKED! WITHIN THAT BOX IS A SHIPMENT OF THE FINEST 19 INCH...
IT'S NOT FULLA TEE VEES IS IT?!
"TEE VEES?!" YOU MEAN TELEVISIONS! WHY NO. I DON'T...
WE DON'T LIKE TEE VEES AROUND HERE
MY DEAR WOMAN! ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT I WOULD BE CARRYING TELEVISION SETS? HA!

TEE VEE! IT IS TO LAUGH! I WOULDN'T WANT TO SELL YOU A TELEVISION FOR THE...
CREAK!
...WORLD...
CHARGE!
SADDLE UP BOYS! THERE'S BEEN A SLIGHT CHANGE OF PLANS!
-AND STAY OFF!!!
I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT! WE WERE LUCKY TO GET OFFA THERE ALIVE!
-BUT YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S REALLY BUGGIN' ME? DO YOU?
WHAT I'D LIKE TO KNOW IS HOW DID THAT CRATE HAPPEN TO FALL APART LIKE THAT?!
the End

© 1986 Gary Fields, Jay Geldhof, Dave Harrison, Mike Kraiger & Jim Rohn
"ZONE" BY MIKE KRAIGER
"ENIGMA FUNNIES" BY GARY FIELDS
"THE HOLO BROTHERS" BY JIM ROHN
"BOB MERCENARY" BY JAY GELDHOF
and
DAVE HARRISON
BROUGHT TO YOU BY
FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS
THREAT!

IT'S THE PULSE POUNDING • SENSES SHATTERING • MIND BENDING • BAT FISHING • **BOJEFFRIES SAGA** BY SPI NE WARPING • ASS KICKING • NOSE WIPING • TOE SMA SHING • SHIN SPLINTERING **ALAN MOORE** AND THUMB BREAKING • EYE GOUGING • THROAT RIPPING • EAR SPL ITTING • HEART STOMPING • **STEVE PARKHOUSE** APPEA RING IN THE FLESH STRIPP ING • LIP STRETCHING • THI

G ENTIRE NER
M SHORT CIRCU
E BRUISING • JOI
G • **DALGODA 8!**
RINDING •NOSTR
• KIDNEY DAMA
T TWISTING • SHI

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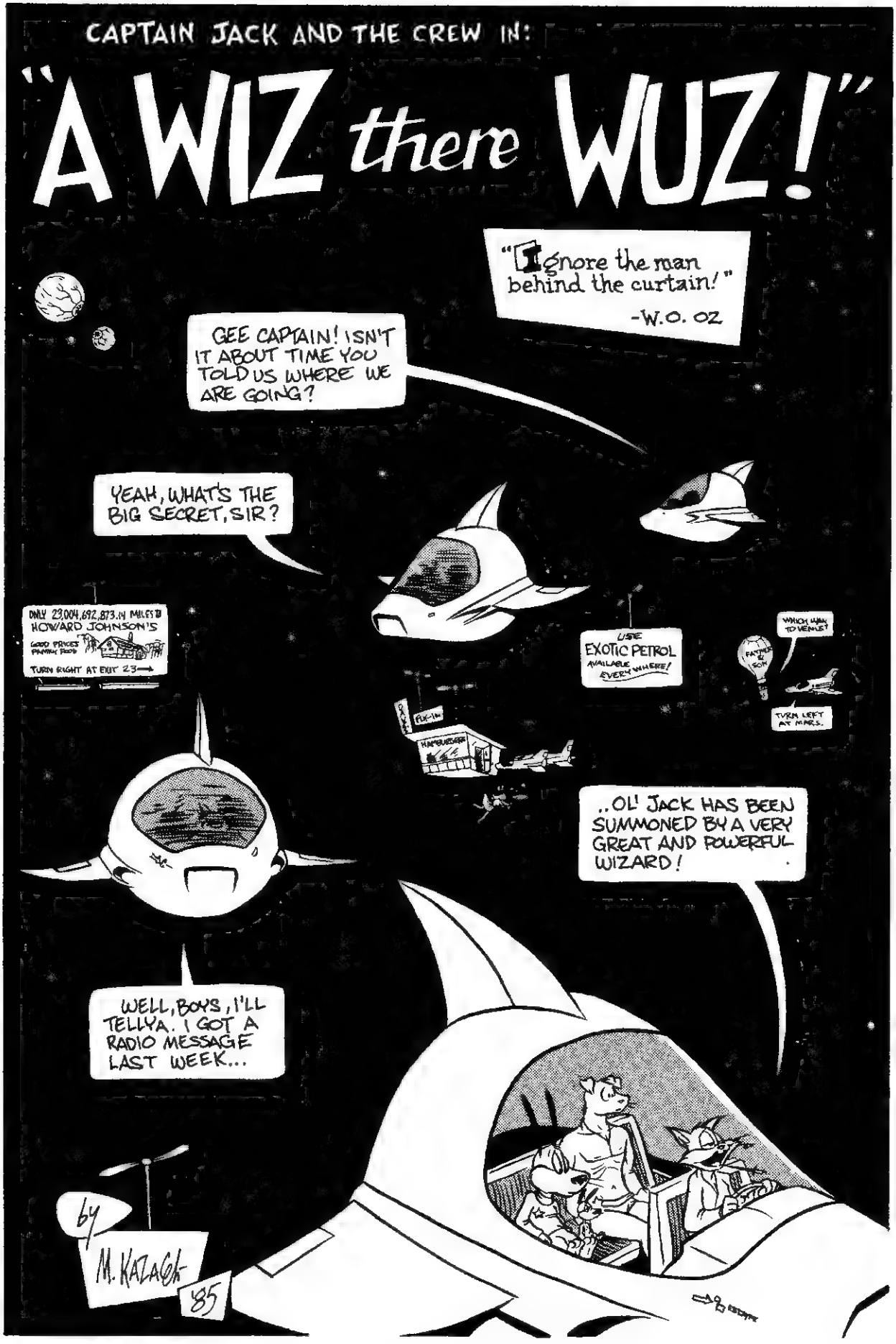
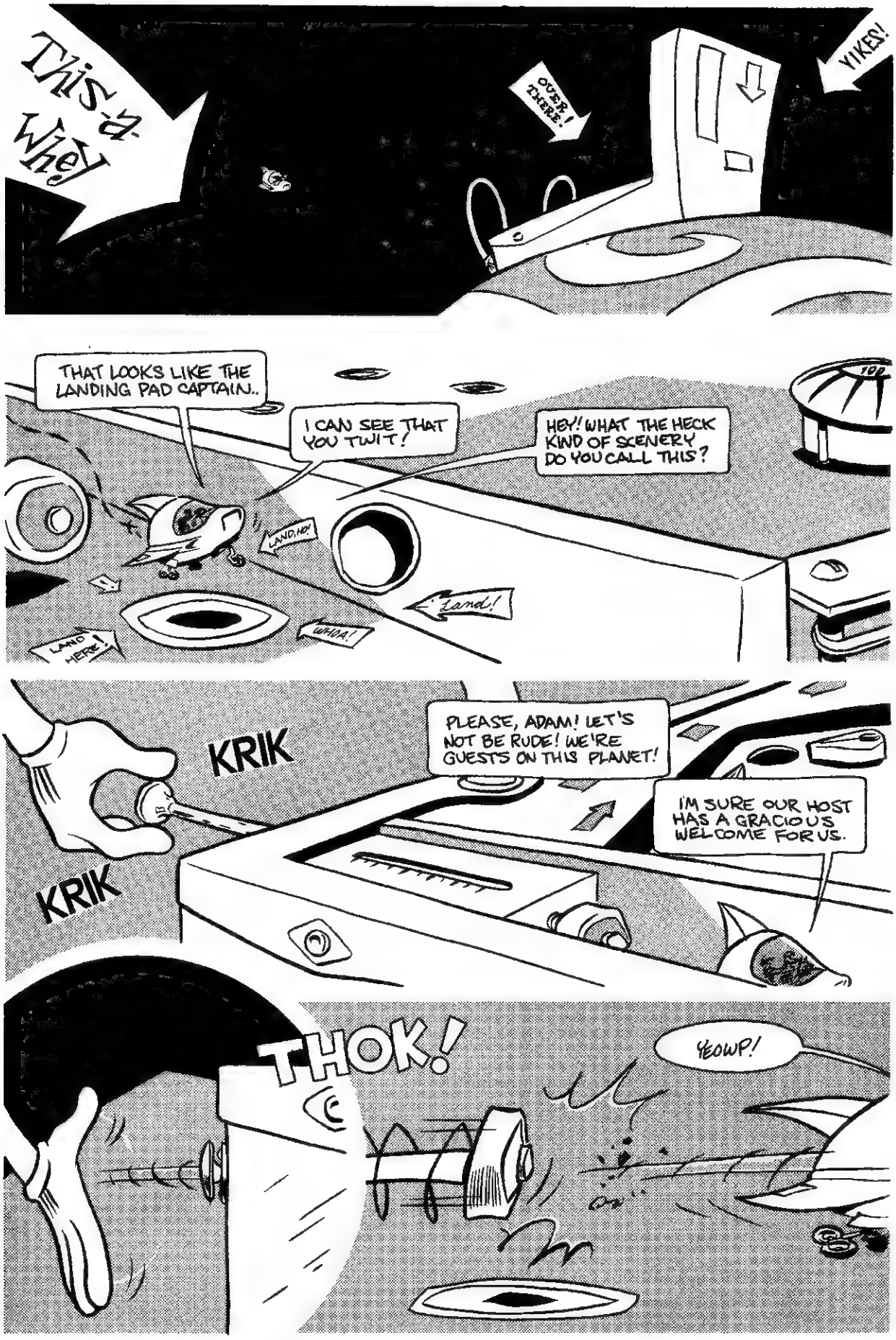
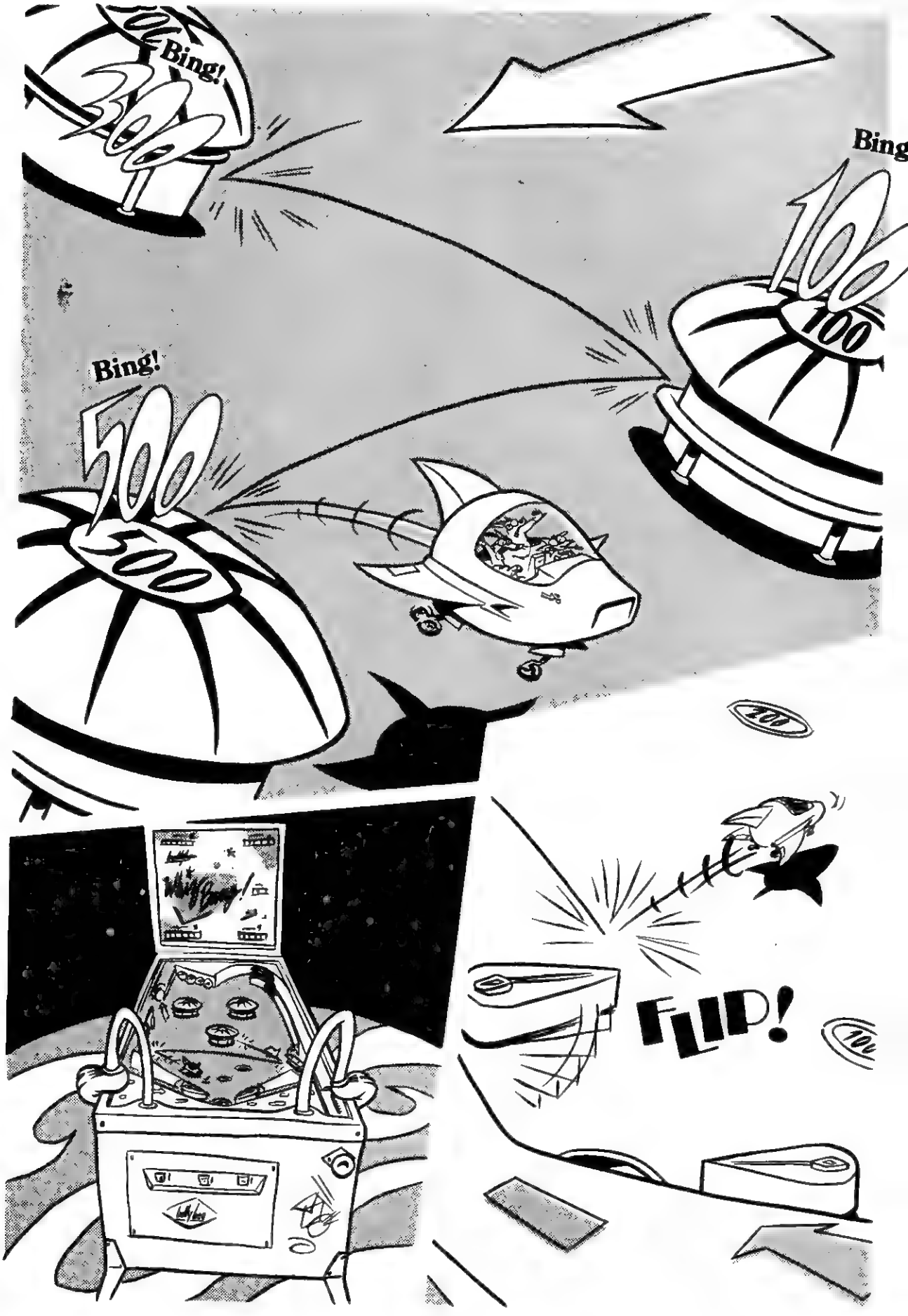
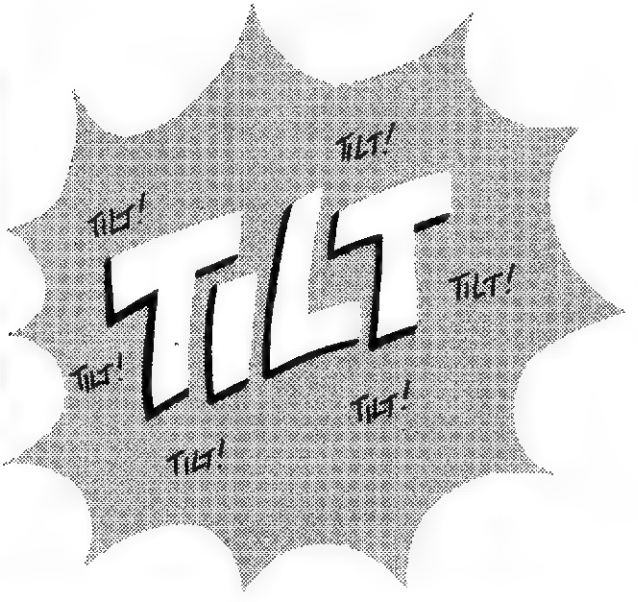

CAPTAIN JACK AND THE CREW IN:
"A WIZ there WUZ!"
"Ignore the man behind the curtain!"
-W.O. OZ
GEE CAPTAIN! ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME YOU TOLD US WHERE WE ARE GOING?
YEAH, WHAT'S THE BIG SECRET, SIR?
ONLY 23,004,692,873.14 MILES TO HOWARD JOHNSON'S
GOOD PRICES
TURN RIGHT AT EXIT 23
USE EXOTIC PETROL AVAILABLE EVERY WHERE!
WHICH WAY TO HOME?
FATHER & SON
TURN LEFT AT MARS.
HAMBURGER
..OL' JACK HAS BEEN SUMMONED BY A VERY GREAT AND POWERFUL WIZARD!
WELL, BOYS, I'LL TELLYA. I GOT A RADIO MESSAGE LAST WEEK...
by M. KAZACK '85

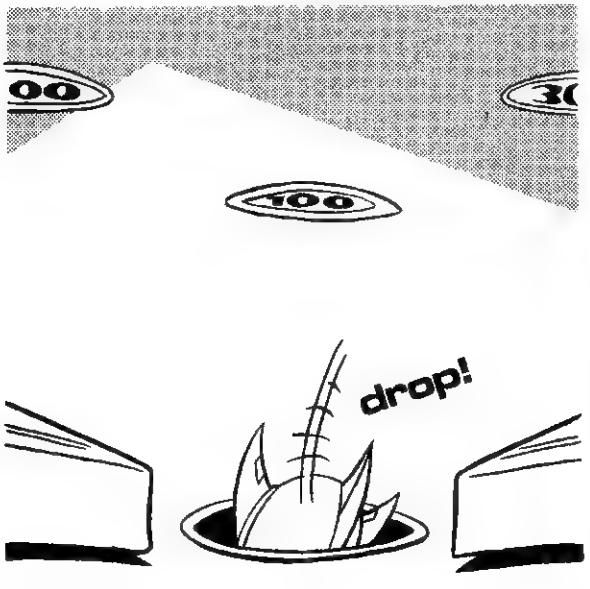
-SEEMS HE'S HEARD ABOUT WHAT A TOUGH BORSCHT SALESMAN I AM!
-SAYS HE'S GOT A BIG DEAL COOKING!
DON'T KEEP US IN SUSPENSE, CAPTAIN!
YEAH! WHO IS HE? -NITRO THE MIGHTY? -PETOK THE POTENT?
EH, "DOODLES the GREAT"....
HE LIVES ON THAT PLANET UP AHEAD..
..THE PLANET POOTWATTLE.


This a Way
OVER THERE!
YIKES!
THAT LOOKS LIKE THE LANDING PAD CAPTAIN..
I CAN SEE THAT YOU TWIT!
HEY! WHAT THE HECK KIND OF SCENERY DO YOU CALL THIS?
LAND, HO!
Land!
WHOA!
LAND HERE!
KRIK
KRIK
PLEASE, ADAM! LET'S NOT BE RUDE! WE'RE GUESTS ON THIS PLANET!
I'M SURE OUR HOST HAS A GRACIOUS WELCOME FOR US.
THOK!
YEOWP!

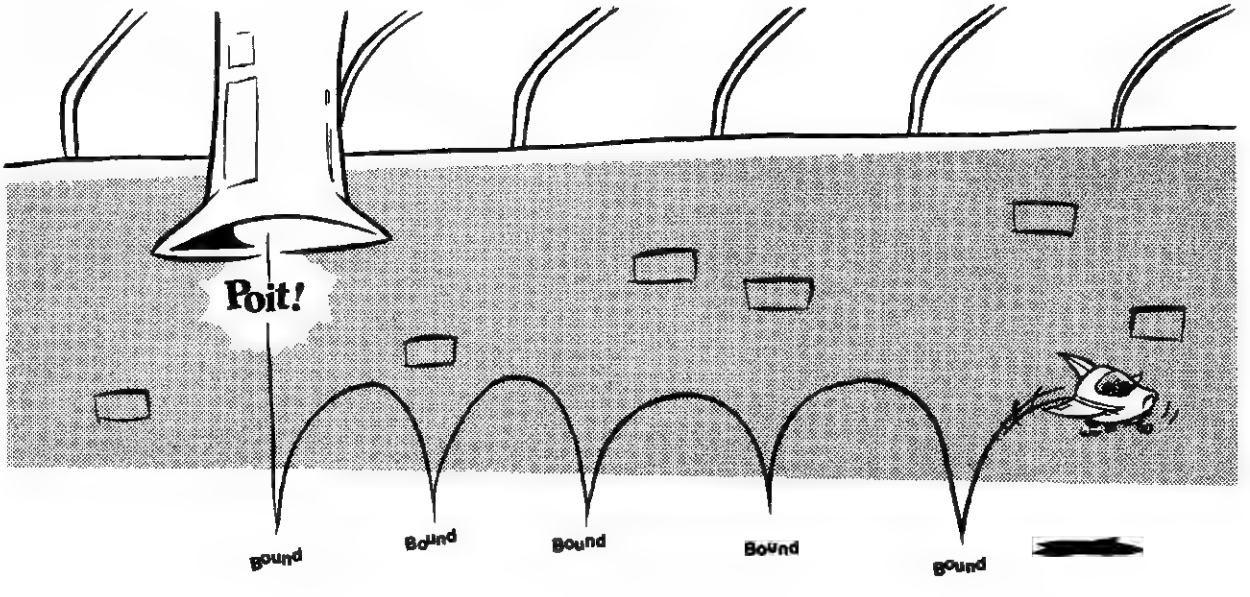

Bing!
Bing
Bing!
500
500
100
100
100
FLIP!

shake
shake
shake!


TILT!
TILT!
TILT!
TILT!
TILT!
TILT!
TILT!


drop!

AW, HECK! AND NO FREE GAME EITHER!
(SHUT THE HELL UP!)


Poit!
Bound
Bound
Bound
Bound
Bound

THUMP!
JEEPERS, WHERE ARE WE, CAP?
YOU'RE ON TOP OF ME, GET OFF!!
HELLOO, WHAT'S THIS? GUESTS!
POST NO BILLS
HELLO! HELLO! WELCOME! I AM POODLES! WIZARD OF POOTWATTLE!
BE ZORCH
PADDIO!
YOU MUST BE THE CAPTAIN! GLAD T'SEE YA! WHAT'S NEW? HOW'S TRICKS? HA?
Doink.

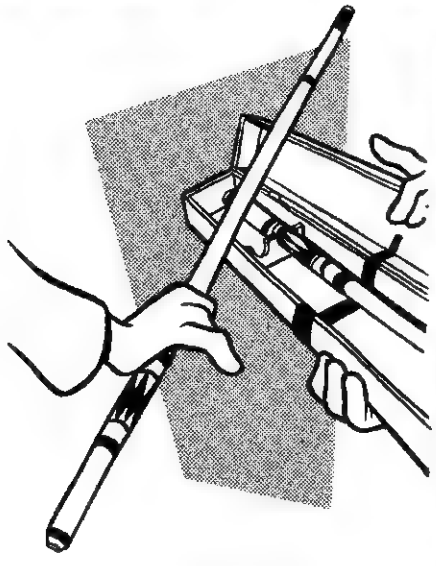
YESSIR! THAT ONE WOWED 'EM IN PITTSBURGH! BIG LAFFS! THEY KNEW OL' DOODLES HAD A HAND IN IT! AND SPEAKING OF HANDS....
AND
IS
BALM
SOMEBODY SEZ TO ME "DOODLES" HE SEZ "HAVE YOU EVER HAD YOUR PALM READ?" I SEZ "YEAH!"
HE SEZ "WELL, WHAT'S WITH THAT LITTLE ALUMINUM SIDING ALL OVER YOUR HANDS?" I SEZ WE GOT TIRED OF REPAINTING 'EM RED EVERY SPRING!"
HAW, THAT'S A KILLER!!
swak!
-YOU OKAY CAPTAIN?
HA HA HA HA HA HA!
uk uk gak
gak
DUCKIE.
WHOOOOP! COME THIS WAY, GENTLEMEN!

...SO WHEN DO WE GET DOWN TO BUSINESS?
HEAVENS TO BETSY! DON'T BE SO FORMAL!
NOOOOOO!
WRECK ROOM

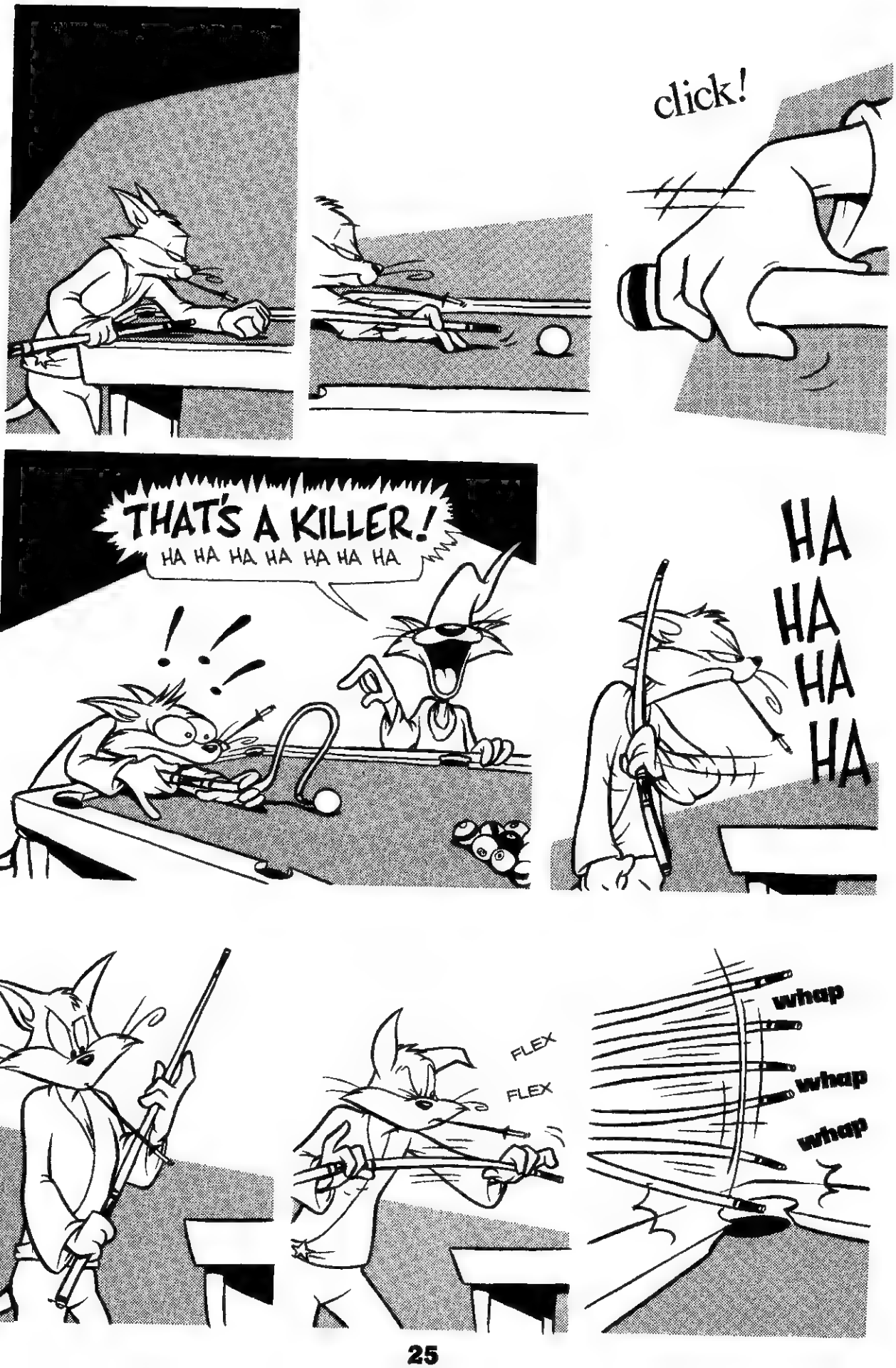
PERHAPS YOU'D CARE TO DISCUSS IT OVER A GAME OF POOL, CAPTAIN?

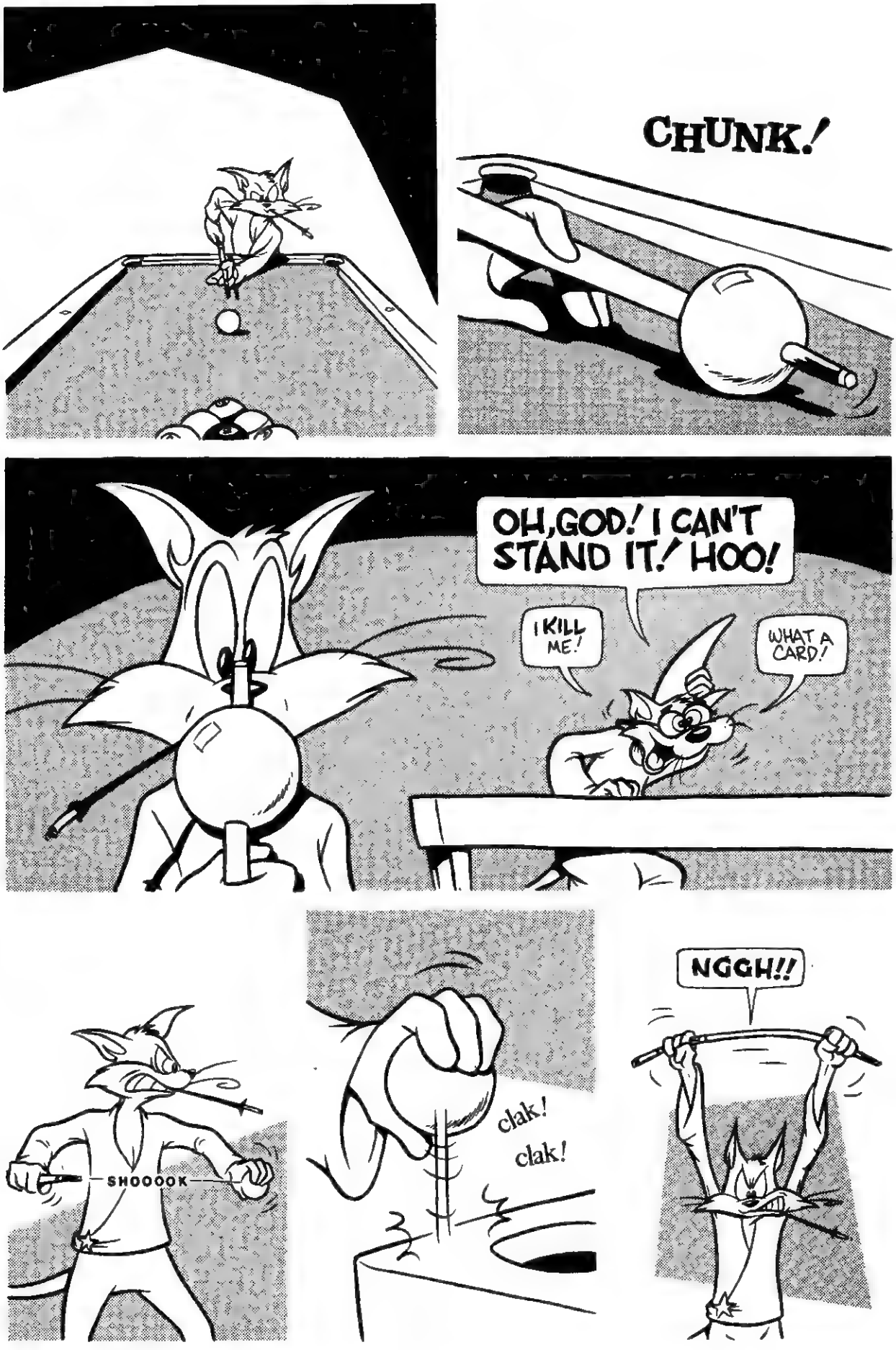
DID HIS WIZARDLINESS SAY "POOL"? MY DEAR SIR, I COULDN'T THINK OF ENGAGING IN SUCH BLASPHEMOUS ACTIVITY...

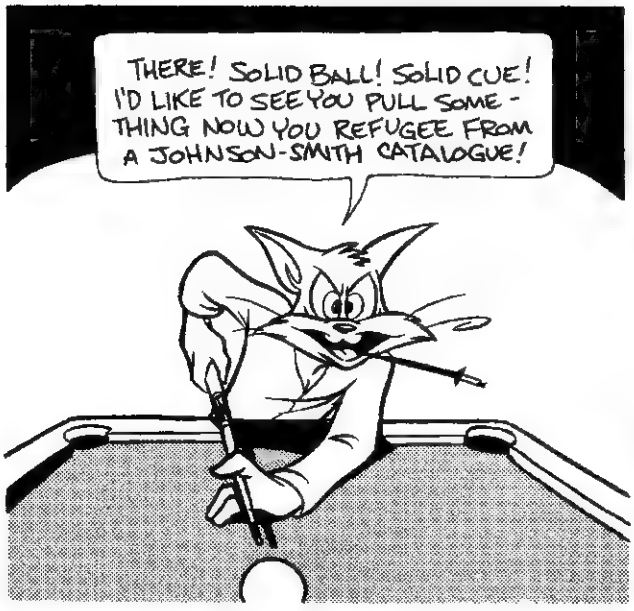
..UNLESS OF COURSE, THE STAKES WERE HIGH ENOUGH.....



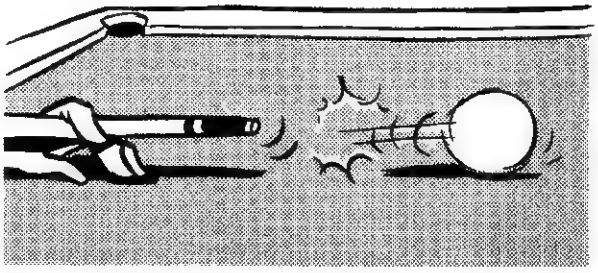
YOU MAY BREAK MR. JACK.....
MMMM, YES! EXCELLENT!


click!
THAT'S A KILLER!
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
FLEX
FLEX
whap
whap
whap

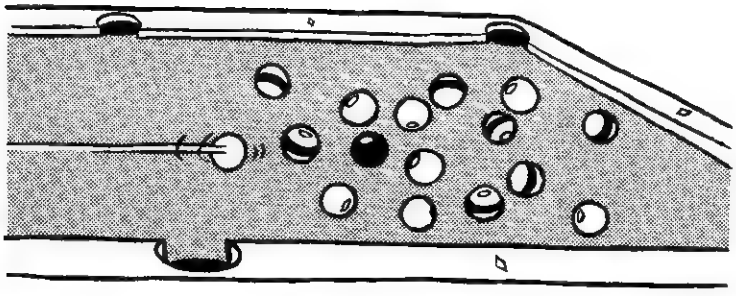

CHUNK!
OH, GOD! I CAN'T STAND IT! HOO!
I KILL ME!
WHAT A CARD!
clak!
clak!
SHOOOOK
NGGH!!

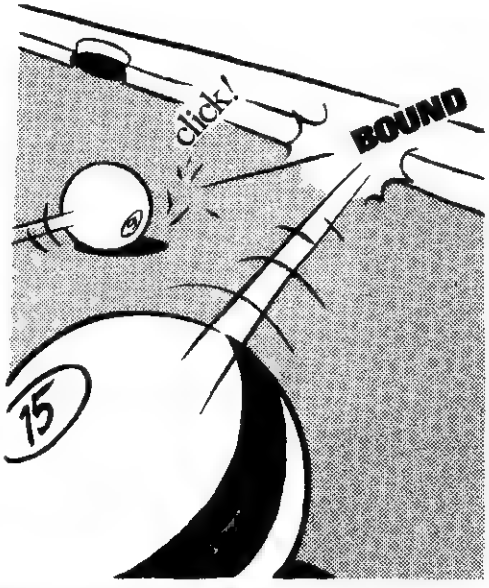

THERE! SOLID BALL! SOLID CUE! I'D LIKE TO SEE YOU PULL SOME-THING NOW YOU REFUGEE FROM A JOHNSON-SMITH CATALOGUE!

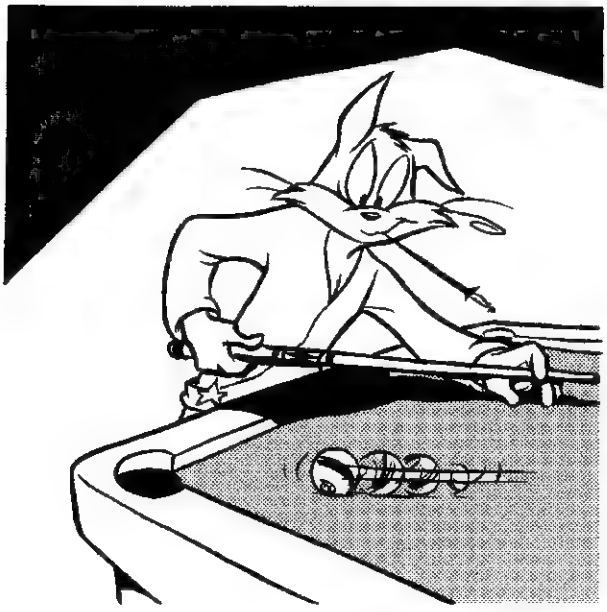
Click!

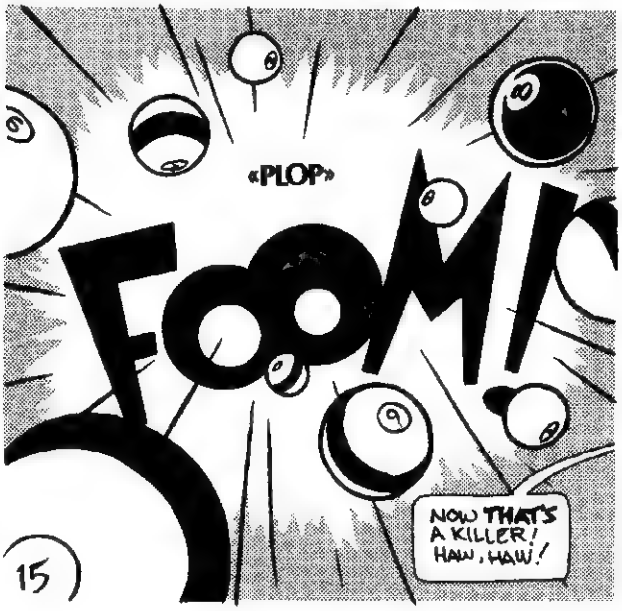


BREAK!

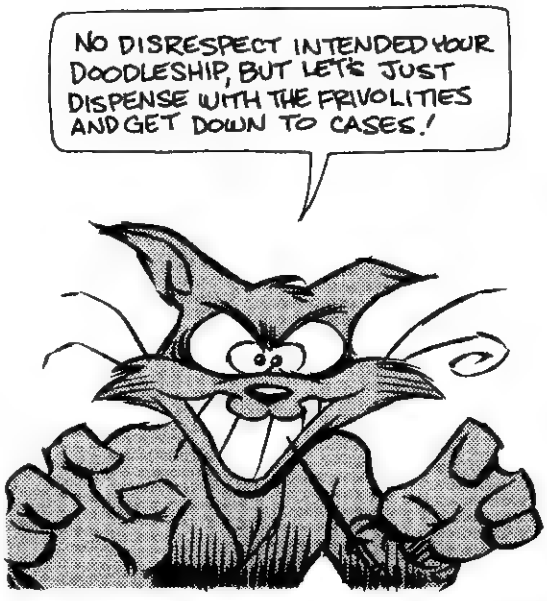



click!
BOUND
15



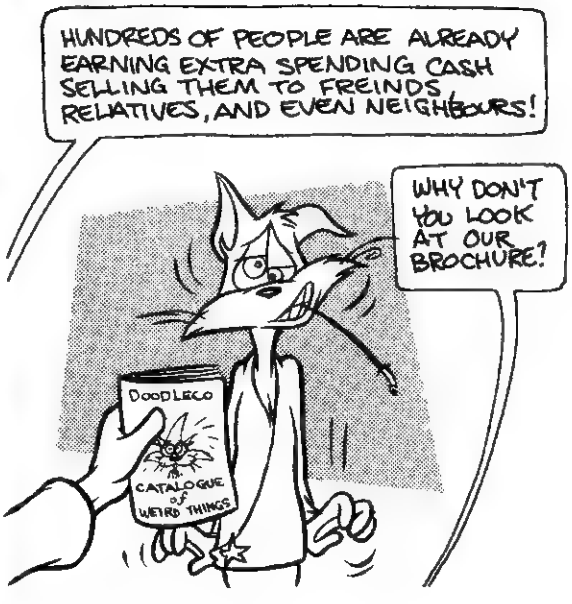

«PLOP»
FOOM!
NOW THAT'S A KILLER! HAW, HAW!
15

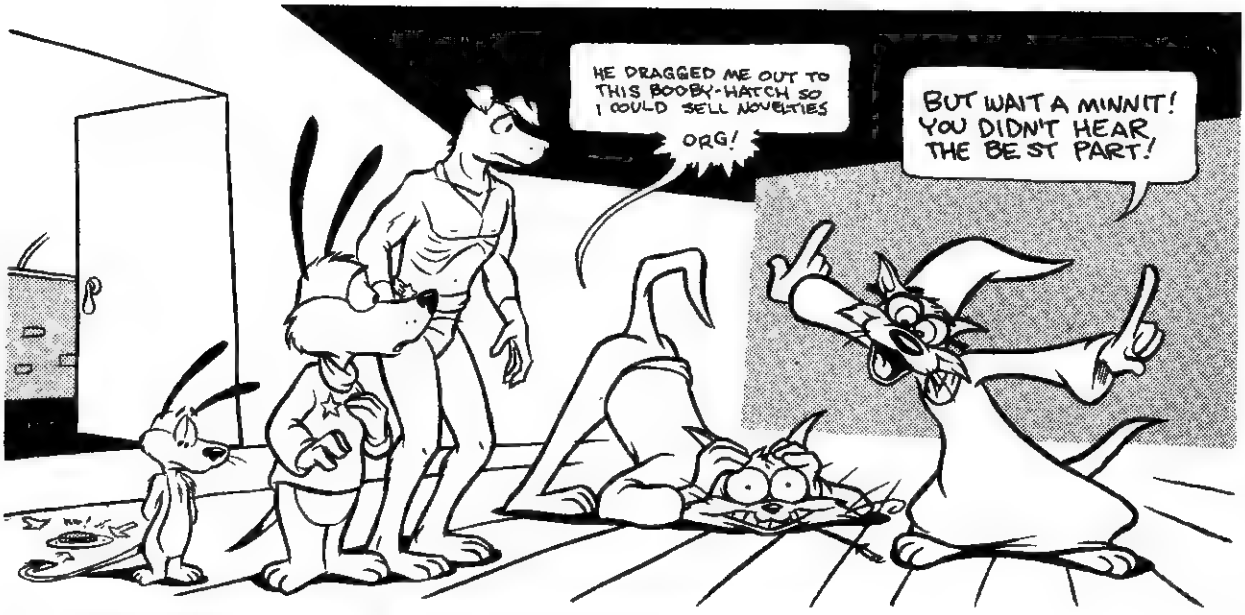
HEY, I KNOW! HOW 'BOUT A FAST GAME OF CANASTA?
Flip
Flip
Flip

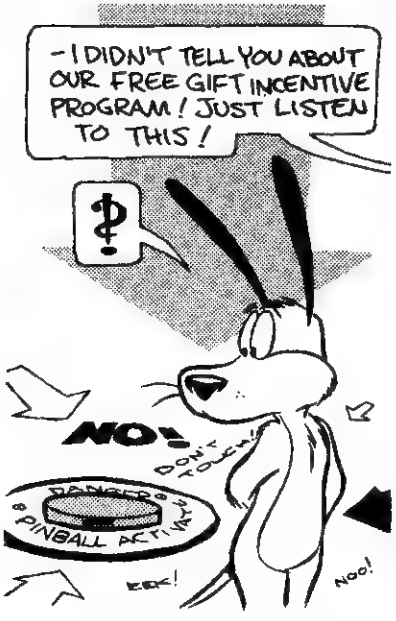

NO DISRESPECT INTENDED YOUR DOODLESHIP, BUT LET'S JUST DISPENSE WITH THE FRIVOLITIES AND GET DOWN TO CASES!

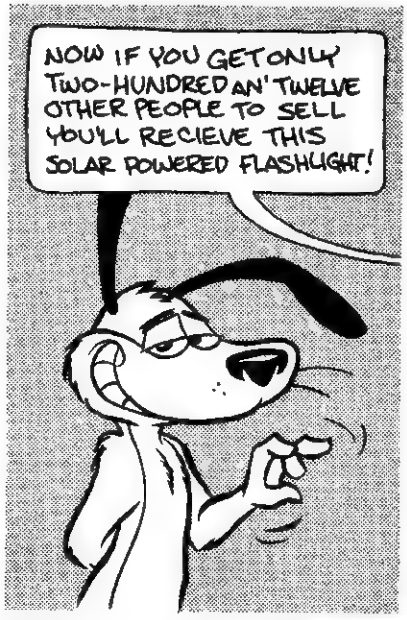
SO PLEASE, DOODLES... DARLING DOODLES...
SWEET HEART...
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF OUR LITTLE TETE A TETE? TELL ME, EH?

WHY CERTAINLY LAD! THE WIZARD BUSINESS HASN'T BEEN TOO GOOD LATELY, SO I STARTED A LITTLE NOVELTY COMPANY! I MAKE EXPLODING NECKTIES, INFLATABLE I.C.B.M.'s GLOW-IN-THE-DARK MUCILAGE, GARLIC FLAVOURED ONIONS, THE WHOLE BIT!

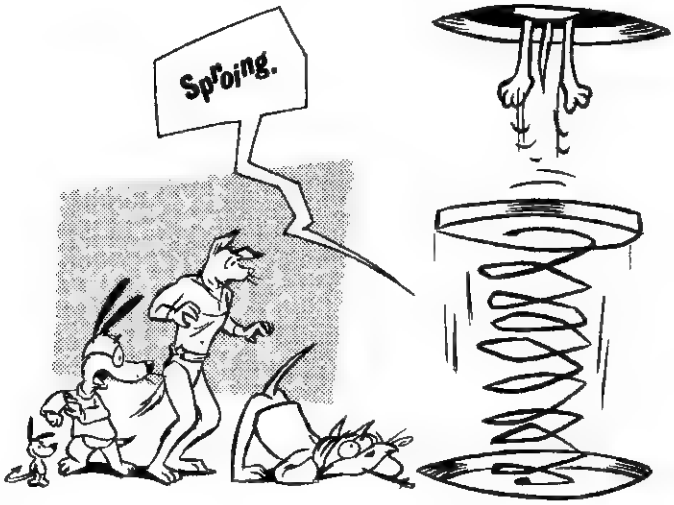

HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE ARE ALREADY EARNING EXTRA SPENDING CASH SELLING THEM TO FREINDS, RELATIVES, AND EVEN NEIGHBOURS!
WHY DON'T YOU LOOK AT OUR BROCHURE!
DOODLECO
CATALOGUE of WEIRD THINGS

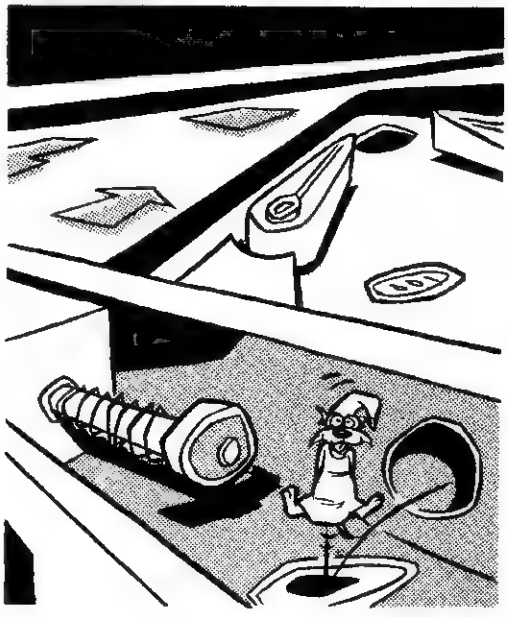

HE DRAGGED ME OUT TO THIS BOOBY-HATCH SO I COULD SELL NOVELTIES
ORG!
BUT WAIT A MINNIT! YOU DIDN'T HEAR THE BEST PART!

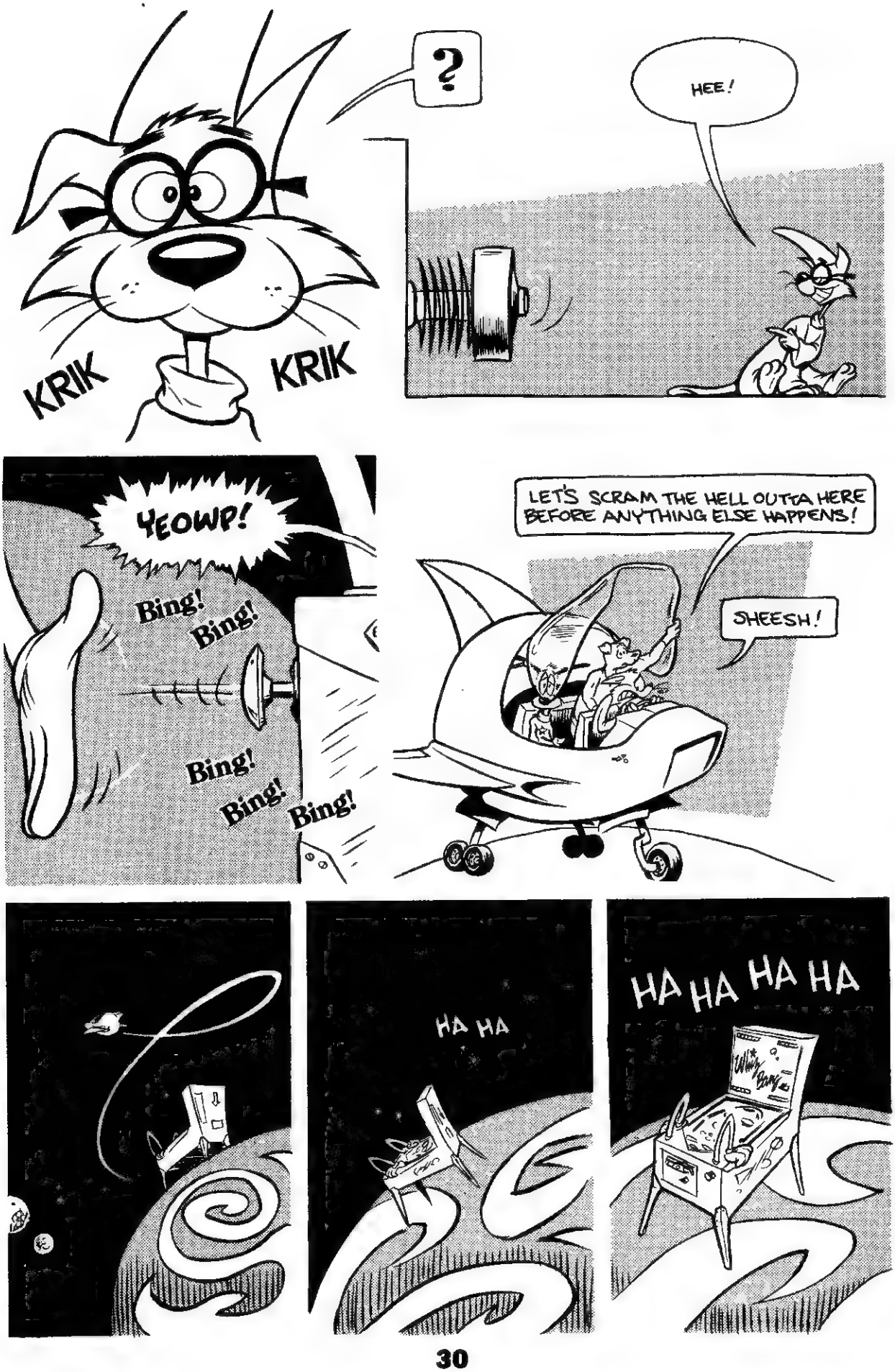

-I DIDN'T TELL YOU ABOUT OUR FREE GIFT INCENTIVE PROGRAM! JUST LISTEN TO THIS!
NO!
DON'T TOUCH!
DANGER
PINBALL ACTIVITY
EEK!
NOO!


NOW IF YOU GET ONLY TWO-HUNDRED AN' TWELVE OTHER PEOPLE TO SELL YOU'LL RECIEVE THIS SOLAR POWERED FLASHLIGHT!

BZZT!
PINBALL AC


Sproing.




KRIK
KRIK
?
HEE!
YEOWP!
Bing!
Bing!
Bing!
Bing!
Bing!
LET'S SCRAM THE HELL OUTTA HERE BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE HAPPENS!
SHEESH!
HA HA
HA HA HA HA

Next Issue: "ANOTHER SATURDAY NIGHT"

New Hope: Where dreams begin...

To Die

JOURNEYS

The Adventures of Wolverine MacAlistaire

From FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

[Contiued from inside front cover]

Little did either of us realize when we became roommates how truly incompatible we were; that one day I would lose Mike's cat (temporarily), or that he would cause me to miss the first twenty minutes of **Citizen Kane** in Ann Arbor, both grounds for justifiable homicide. Nonetheless, our apartment, in the building that had seen better days, in the city that had seen better days, that Mike and I shared with aspiring cineaste Brian Gabel, was, in a way, a refuge from the present, where a couple of self-taught artists created their own school, regardless of the prevailing mediocrity. Here, Clampett and Jones still directed six shorts a year in blazing IB Technicolor; here, Harvey Kurtzman still presided over **Mad** comics. On 625 Madison Avenue, Stan and Jack churned out the Marvel Comics group, Crumb was still tripping on Haight-Ashbury and filling up his sketchbook, Wally Wood was in his prime, filled with youthful enthusiasm, and notions of self-destruction would never-ever occur to him. It was Berlin in the Twenties, or Storyville at the turn of the Century, or Picasso's Montmartre, or Eisenstein's Moscow, or Woody Allen's Manhattan, or any period of creative flowering in history, and it was all happening now, as long as the bulb in the projector burned, as long as the staples held the illusion together. Did I mention Liverpool in 1960?

We were a couple of undiscovered geniuses who felt unappreciated by the world, who felt that the major improvements in American Popular Culture, and for that matter, Art in general, had passed them by.

In all fairness, some good things had managed to filter in from the present: Spiegelman's **Breakdowns**, Griffith's **Zippy**, Sim's **Cerebus**, Quagmire's **Cutey Bunny**, **The Comics Journal**, **Love and Rockets** #2, Alex Toth's **Bravo for Adventure**, Chet Brown's **Yummy Fur**, David E. Boswell's **Reid Fleming, World's Toughest Milkman**, and who could forget the Bonzo Dog Doodah Band providing the background music? Of course, Mike's list might be a bit different.

Despite the fact that Mike's interests often overlapped my own, there were considerable areas of enthusiasm that were exclusive and sacrosanct. Occasionally, we would attempt to influence one another's artistic development directly, a foolhardy endeavor, to be sure, which would have the disastrous results of hurt feelings, bruised egos, and a paranoid sense of rivalry. I would tell Mike that caricature and humor were fine, but anatomical study and academic drawing were vitally important, too. He would counter that any yo-yo could copy reality. I insisted that Kurtzman could draw realistically, where Mike could not; he accused me that I couldn't draw funny.

Now, between average roommates, there is enough tension, if it goes unchecked, to escalate to global thermonuclear war. But **this** was simply too much. I was damned if **I**, the self-taught master of Neal Adams feathering, was going to live with someone who doubted that I coud draw funny **if** and **when** I felt like it! And so, I filled a good sketch book and a half of funny sketches, just to prove to this dilettante my facile versatility and range.

The only problem was that these were the dopiest, sappiest, saddest sort of cute and cuddly type of sketches you ever laid eyes on, the stuff we associate with Harvey or the Star line; bullshit, in other words. Mike had me dead to rights; I couldn't draw funny to save my soul.

I scurried back to the heroism, the melodrama, the anatomy that was my sole skill. Trapped by the conventions I had strived to perfect, I found my medium of expression totally expressionless. With a sense of utter futility, and a sort of savage lashing out, I pushed it all to the max; I employed overkill. Every muscle defined, every pose dynamic beyond all physical laws, every arm flailing, every leg four miles apart. Bulge upon bulge, mass upon mass, heroic proportion distorted beyond all recognition.

Brian blurted out the words, "Megaton Man!" and we all laughed for a solid twenty minutes. The rest is history, and it's all Mike Kazaleh's fault.

But this is supposed to be about Mike.

Whereas I was content to finance my cartoon moonlighting with restaurant dishwashing, Mike always had a stronger sense of ego in regards to his chosen profession. He was an animator, by God, and he was going to make a living off of it! No more pop's TV store for him! How he ever scrounged up animation work in the Motor City I'll never figure out, but he did. He got himself a commission to do a thirty-second TV ad for a local construction company which Mike would produce, direct, and animate, although Brian often assisted a good deal, all on a shoestring budget, shot on 16 mm in the apartment or in Brian's parent's basement. Occasionally, I would paint cels. He landed a string of such jobs, and, although not exactly Bob Clampett, they were a damn sight more ambitious than the stuff you see on Saturday mornings these days. The kid had the knack.

But he never could get far enough ahead to finance his own short. But the problem was deeper; Mike is above all a perfectionist (in a sloppy, slapdash sort of way—no, no, just kidding) and he didn't feel he had ideas that were good enough for a cartoon. He was not a writer, he would complain. So, he contented himself with producing two and three page underground-type strips, which is an eminently cheaper testing ground.

Now, how Mike wired it all together, I don't know, because I moved to Wisconsin, so I wasn't there. All I know is that one day I got a Xerox copy of Captain Jack and his Crew of the Glass Onion in the mail. Jack, and Adam, and Herman, and Beezlebub were—my God! real and palpable characters—with motivations and hilarious stories—and all that stuff from that fabled apartment of ours, no. 14, lived on in those panels! And I knew, and he knew I knew, and I knew he knew I knew, and he knew I knew he knew I knew . . . that he could **write**!!!

Of course, it would be wrong to read **Captain Jack** as some sort of compromised animated cartoon, because somewhere along the way, Mike had gained a mastery, as well as respect, for the very different comic book medium! Just like I had gained a mastery and respect for humor (good Lord—**choke**!) . . .

Now, Mike lives in Hollywood, working in the big leagues of animation, and doing the Captain for Fantagraphics Books (Denis Kitchen's failure to pick up this series is a shame he will just have to live with—God knows I tried to reason with the man). Anyway, two miserable aspiring cartoonists from Detroit are now two somewhat less miserable real-life cartoonists. The present may not be the past, but it's the only show in town.

What Mike's aspirations are at this point only time will tell; allow me to predict that Mike Kazaleh will be on the forefront of funny for the rest of this century and well into the next, whichever medium he works in.

Me, I know when I'm beat. I'm gonna be a plumber or electrician.

—DONALD SIMPSON
Princeton, WI
1985

A Public Service Announcement
from Kitchen Sink Press
for All You Fantagraphics Funny Animal Fans

YOU SHOULD BE READING

MEGATON man